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Holyoake, George Jacob

Inaugural address
delivered at the...

Manchester

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

NINETEENTH ANNUAL

Co-operative Congress

HELD AT

CARLISLE, MAY 30 & 31, & JUNE 1, 1887,

BY

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, ESQ.

ISSUED BY THE

Central Co-operative Board, City Buildings, Corporation St., Manches

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CO-OPERATIVE CONGRESS,

HELD AT CARLISLE, MAY 30 & 31, & JUNE 1, 1887,

BY

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, ESQ.

ISSUED BY

THE CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BOARD, CITY BUILDINGS,
CORPORATION STREET, MANCHESTER.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

DELEGATES TO THIS CONGRESS,—It was in the year when Her Majesty's reign began that I first became a speaker on co-operative subjects; so that this year, in which you accord me the distinction of being your president, is also the half-century terminus of whatever service I have been able to render the cause of Industrial Association, represented in this historic city of Carlisle to-day. On one occasion the Duke of Kent, the father of the Queen, took the chair at a great meeting in the city of London, called by the originator of the co-operative cause. The duke testified that "he deemed the views of Mr. Owen conducive to the well-being and good order of society"—which has proved true. Future historians of this century will find it difficult to name any social feature of the great Victorian reign more original, more English, or more beneficent, than this of co-operation.

Great advantage has been conferred upon this cause by the distinguished persons who have presided at previous Congresses. Their eminence and wider knowledge have caused the co-operative question to be considered in quarters we could not hope to reach. If by your courtesy I interrupt, for one year, these advantages, I will endeavour to atone by giving a brief account of the conceptions known to have determined the character and quality of co-operation—which no one remains to tell, who has had the same experience of it as myself. To many outside us the story may be informing—to many of the new generation in our ranks, it may be inciting—to others familiar with it I recall the maxim of him who surpassed "Marlowe's mighty line," who said:—

Truth can never be confirmed enough,
Though doubts did ever sleep.

We represent here to-day a new force in industry which is called "co-operation"—whose inspiration is self-dependence—whose method is economy—whose principle is equity. In co-operation the profits of the store and the workshop are equitably shared by those who produce them. Before the days of co-operation, labour had no control

over its own fortune or future. Trade unions have given the workman some control over the wages of labour. It is co-operation alone which gives him control over the profits of his work.*

The outlook of the industrial class fifty years ago was as dreary as Siberia. Food was scarce. The English race was lean. Even girls had an ill-favoured look—because underfed. In a few years after the repeal of the Corn Laws every million of adult persons in England weighed 6,000 tons heavier than they did before the repeal (some calculators place it as high as 12,000), and the young people had grown ten times comelier than they were. Then the workman was in weekly dread of further reduction in his wages. He dare not appear in his workshop in good-looking clothes (if he had them), as his master would conclude he was earning too much, and reduce his wages; just as an Irish tenant dared not improve his cabin lest his landlord should increase his rent. I know this was done in Birmingham workshops; I was there and saw it done. The employer, by finding the men work, thought them under obligation to him; sympathy for them was little in his way. He indeed kept the wolf from the door, but, like the wolf dog, he bit them if they turned aside. Over the whole plain of labour and trade you saw society in conflict. No arms were used, and yet men were struck down; no blood was spilt, and yet men died. Neither giant nor feudal lord were any longer there; a new tyrant reigned in their stead, more omnipresent and pitiless than they—whose name was Capital. Like his predecessors, he had relenting moods, and posed as a benefactor, when

With one hand, he put
A penny in the urn of poverty,
And with the other took a shilling out.

The right of irresponsible aggressiveness which capital still has, corrupted it like despotism, and made it insatiable.† It then (I still speak of fifty years ago) held in its hands the food of the people and the means of labour. Everywhere workmen were struggling for the places of their fellows; the tradesman, the manufacturer, and the merchant were by all the arts of "business" or imposture,

* Mr. W. H. Hey, a member of our Central Board, Secretary of the Iron Founders' Society, is one of the practical advocates of the alliance of Unionism and Co-operation. Mr. Burt, M.P., Mr. Broadhurst, M.P., Mr. Crawford, M.P., Mr. Burnett, and other eminent trade-unionist leaders, are on the co-operative side.

† The co-operator is not against capital. Capital is exactly like fire—an excellent servant when it warms the inmates, but a bad one when it burns down the house.

compassing the ruin of their rivals. This would have been thought to be social war had it not been called "competition." In a population, then, of 16 million persons, equally invited to nature's table, one million of fortunate persons commanded all the seats, and 15 millions stood wistfully looking on, and the waiters never came their way. All that fell to them were crumbs from the trenchers of Dives. Then the Pioneers began to wonder whether this was "the chief end of man" and the final outcome of civilisation, and asked in the words of Goethe, which my early friend Ebenezer Elliott rendered for our reading—

How like an anvil is this land!
And we lie on it like good metal,
Long hammered by a senseless hand;
But will such thumping make a kettle?

The pioneers of this movement seeing that capital governed the world, and workmen had none, bethought themselves how they might acquire it. They saw that capital was an excellent thing. A savage can catch only ten fish a day. The capitalist lends him a net and he catches 200, when the capitalist takes 190 of the fish for the use of the net. That is a good thing for the capitalist. But in due time the capitalist buys the river, when he is able to—and when it suits his purpose he does—exclude the savage from catching fish any more. That is a bad thing for the savage. The policy for the savage to pursue is to get capital and buy his own net and keep all the fish he catches. This is the theory of co-operation.

Then the question arose, how were the savages to buy nets who had no money? No avenue seemed open to any human eye whereby capital could come to workmen; no telescope could reveal it on the whole horizon of industry. The Pioneers had no funds, nor had they any credit. Money lenders never looked in their direction. Nor could they hope for gifts. The philanthropists were scarce in the workmen's quarters. Plainly there was no help save by creating capital; and there was no method of doing this except by collecting a few shillings to buy some provisions wholesale, sell them to each other at shop prices and save the difference. To many this has seemed ridiculous humility, but it was the only form of self-help open to them, and honest self-help is never ridiculous. Thus was discovered the art of creating capital by those who had none.

This had been done before for the purpose of cheapness, but never for the purpose of raising a class in the social scale. The Pioneers

might not have been so adventurous had not their attention been drawn to the fact that in labour districts every 100 shops depended for maintenance upon 4,000 poor families, who paid yearly the enormous sum of £10,000 for having their humble purchases handed over the counter to them; while a single well-managed store of their own, would supply them all better and put the £10,000 in their own pockets. This, which seemed then and was called, a Utopian forecast, is now the common experience of our stores, for, as a rule, every store of 4,000 members makes more than £10,000 a year profit. Indeed several stores make more—as Sowerby Bridge and Penicuik, for instance, with less than 3,000 members, make yearly £14,000 each. Thus Leeds with 23,000 members makes £59,000 annually. Oldham co-operators (the Industrial and Equitable Societies together) with less than 23,000 members made last year £90,000 of profit.

If a man took out a good working patent, whereby 23,000 persons could make £90,000 a year without putting anything in the bank, without working for it, or begging it, or borrowing it, or stealing it, or incurring any privation to do it, such a patentee would soon have numerous applications for licenses. Now, co-operation has registered the patent whereby the members of a store have only to appoint a few wise managers, and, doing nothing, paying nothing, they grow rich while they sleep; provided that when they are awake, they have common sense enough to buy what they require at their own store.

So little did Ferdinand Lassalle believe in these results, that he invented State Socialism in Germany, teaching labour the lesson of despair, representing that the "brazen law of wages" bound the workman to unceasing servitude, and made self-help impossible. Undeterred, and with true English pluck, the Old Pioneers regarded rather the heroic saying of Franklin, "To be thrown on our own resources is to be cast in the very lap of Fortune." They saw that reasonable and persistent thrift was the ministering angel who can lead the humblest households from beggary to competence. With thrift they associated justice to others, and adopted the two principles of Economy and Equity; and it was out of these two conceptions that the new wealth-making power of co-operation grew.

Lord Sherbrooke lately reminded us, in his wise way, of the Latin proverb which says "Economy is a great fortune." The Pioneers proved this when they began by saving their quarterly dividends instead of spending them, and by leaving them in the store at interest—which further increased their amount. It was economy

which led to the rule of paying for goods at the counter, thus providing ready-money for the market and giving profitable advantage there. No credit meant no booking expenses. No debt meant no risk and no loss. The late Mr. Fawcett calculated that the national change to ready money transactions would be a gain to the people far exceeding that of the entire remission of the National Debt. Economy is against debt—as a debtor who does not pay, or who will not pay, is a thief in disguise. Whether his intentions be good or bad, he alike cripples or ruins the stores which trust him. He obliges you to annex the County Court to the store—(Judge Hughes will tell us if that be desirable)—breeding incurable alienation in those who are sued, which is a loss of good-feeling as well as custom. Economy condemned underselling others; as decreasing the amount returnable to members; as unfriendly to shopkeepers—unfriendliness being contrary to the policy of co-operation, which acts on the associative principle that goodwill is profit. It was economy which prescribed giving fair weight, fair measure, and keeping good faith with purchasers—because good faith creates confidence, and confidence brings custom, and the larger the custom the larger the gain. Many persons will tell you that honesty is a saleable article—who never bring it into the market themselves. The co-operator puts it there, and a thousand stores prove that the unaccustomed commodity yields a good profit. The co-operator gives a pledge to the public that purchasers at the store shall be able to obtain just measure and the truth—as to the quality of what they buy. Thus, as far as his dealings go, the co-operator has silenced the tongue of what Lord Tennison calls the "Giant Liar—Trade." It was economy that formed the great wholesale buying societies of Manchester and Glasgow, which already carry between them more than six millions of ready money into the market, purchasing cheaper and with better discernment than single stores can; and by securing pure commodities, the health of families is promoted, and the pain and cost of such sickness as impure food continually occasions—are prevented. It is economy which has given our working-class members a new sense of independence—not yet possessed by the middle and upper classes—the independence which pays its way; for he who is in debt is owned by others. The shoes upon the feet—the garments upon the backs of children of the indebted workman—belong to the local shoemaker, tailor, or draper. The plumpness of his buxom wife is the property of the butcher and baker, and the Shylocks of the shop might, more reasonably than the

Jew of Venice, claim their pound of flesh at his hands. No man is independent who does not own his family and himself. It is well-understood economy which sets apart a portion of its gain for social and commercial education—for ignorance is bad for profits. It is "The worm in the bud which feeds on the damask cheek of"—Dividends. Having given an equal vote to every member of a store, to the stupid and the wise alike—and the stupid being generally in the majority—education becomes an economical necessity, if the directors are to run anything above a "one-horse" store. No directors, however wise, can use their wisdom except as the intelligence of the members permit. The greatest stores we have, might be twice as rich as they are, were the members twice as wise as they are.* A sensible proverb says "A good coat may cover a fool—but it cannot conceal him." Co-operation gives good coats, and by its educational funds takes care that they cover intelligent members. Without an intelligence fund there can be no propaganda, and propaganda is advertisement, and the only honest kind of advertisement, because it has instruction in it. It was economy that gave votes to women as well as men, because everybody knows as well in England as in America that while "the husband may boast of holding the reins, it's generally the wife who says where the wagon is going."

It was, as I ventured to explain to the Congress of Milan, economy which saved the societies from making a profession of theological or political opinion a co-operative object; not that they were indifferent to these things—very far from it, but because it would have taken too much time to agree upon a standard, and have delayed indefinitely the formation of a store, if every member had to be converted to a given opinion before admission. Neutrality was adopted as conducive to business, as well as to good-feeling. Thus they also avoided the sleepless resentments of wounded conscience and political conflict, perilous to that unity which is the abiding strength of co-operation. As co-operators soon found that few of them were infallible, or entirely amiable, they concluded that friendly patience towards others was not only good sense but good policy, since each might one day need forbearance himself. Errors of manner or of mind, which could not be amended by indignation, might be amended by argument or wiser example. Hatred was adjudged a profitless sentiment, because it wasted time to gratify it,

* Ignorance breaks out in a society just like the smallpox; ill-informed stores have it badly, some stores die of it. Even Mr. Pitman would allow the members to be vaccinated with knowledge, provided the lymph is pure.

was contrary to co-operative economy, and paid too great a compliment to those who were disliked. As debts were not recoverable by statute after a certain time, it was thought well that animosities should be terminable; and if any arose, they should be closed with the accounts, and not carried forward to the next quarter.

Such were the fertile inspirations of economy. But the devices of Economy are but the organisation of selfishness, unless Equity takes care of them. Equity is not the same thing as equality. Equality may be produced by bringing down the high to the level of the low, while it is the nature of equity to elevate the low to the eminence of the high. The early co-operators had the instinct of equity in their hearts, and hence they called themselves the "Rochdale Equitable Pioneers." The first step to equity is that each who works according to his capacity shall be rewarded according to his earnings. Therefore, in the store the customer was made a partner, and given profits according to his purchases. And, as more was thought of the workshop than of the store, it was strenuously proposed, in like manner, after paying each person engaged in manufactory or mine, the wages value of his services, he, too, should receive a like equitable share of the profits according to his earnings. It is a great thing to put trade on the level of morality; it is a far greater to put competence into the hands of honest labour, so that every working household shall be secured against dependence or precariousness. Co-operators are not haters of capital; they are creators of capital. It may be a good thing, and it often has been, when capital hires labour: it is a better when labour hires capital; pays it according to its risk; pays it fairly, pays it even generously, but pays it only once—taking care that it does not come back a second time, siphoning the dividend of labour, and filling the heart of industry with suspicion and despair. Equity means that for every honest man who has work in him, the door of profit-sharing shall be open—open widely, open always, open evermore—and that no man shall from necessity stumble into pauperism. His want of sense or want of thrift may rob him of repent or power, but shall never sink him so low that crime shall be justifiable, or his fate be a scandal to anyone save himself. It is thus that Economy and Equity have created Co-operation. It was economy that gave it its method; it was equity which gave it its strength, its charm—that made its character, and brought it repent and respect.

Therefore co-operation in the store is not a philanthropy, nor a scheme of benevolence, nor a form of Utopian sentimentality, but a

business which has to pay like any other honest business—and does it. Co-operation is not an emotional contrivance for enabling others to escape the responsibility of making exertions on their own behalf, but a manly device for giving honest men an equitable opportunity of helping themselves.

Co-operation in the workshop—which is far more difficult—means that all engaged in it contribute individually to its prosperity. It does not mean an association in which a few think, and others dream; in which a few work, and others do nothing; in which some are earnest, and others indifferent; in which the earnest make sacrifices, and the indifferent make none; and in which a few carry off the profits which the many make. Workshop co-operation is a scheme of industrial concert, where each, caring for its repute and welfare, puts his character into his work, certain, in due course, to receive his fair share of the profits made by the industry, skill, and goodwill of all concerned.

This, the nobler and manlier problem which co-operators have set themselves to solve, is far more arduous than the problem of the store. The strongest enemies of the store are without, while those of the workshop are mostly within. Suspicion, distrust, impatience; want of capacity on the part of some; want of confidence in those who have capacity, on the part of others; and, most of all, want of generous enthusiasm for the ascendancy of labour on the part of those in whose hands the direction is placed. These are the enemies within. These difficulties are now decreasing. We have now two Labour Associations devoted to the promotion of workshop success. Productive societies are multiplying within our borders. Struggle, disappointment and despair may for a time be the lot of some undertakings. But let encouragement befriended them. Bend every energy to aid them; lend every influence to extend them. The pride of every co-operator is concerned for their success. Let us bear in mind the resolute words of Lindsay Gordon—

Tho' this world be but a bubble,
Two things stand like stone—
Kindness in another's trouble,
Courage in our own.

Our store adversaries have mitigated their opposition. As the Queen's speech says, we are "at peace with foreign powers." We have attained a business influence which can be directed in our self-defence. We make the fortunes of many tradesmen by maintaining the market prices in our stores, whereby the tradesman can undersell us at a

greater advantage to himself than he could if we undersold him. If our storemakers supersede some shops, that is no more than the shopkeeper does himself when he can. The big shop absorbs the little ones without mercy. The gigantic clubs supersede the small hotels—the palatial hotels depopulate the historic inns—the handsome bars extinguish the humbler public-houses. Opulent merchants and manufacturers make rings to land their rivals of lesser means in the bankruptcy courts. When everybody is eating up everybody else—who can show "just cause or impediment" why working men should not co-operate together to prevent them—eating up him?

This obvious policy of self-protection by the people is becoming clear to other nations than ours. At this Congress we have the honour to receive foreign ambassadors of co-operative association. America, the great land of hospitality to new ideas, has deputed to us Mrs. Imogene C. Fales, who has, in many wise and earnest pages, proclaimed the felicitous maxim, "Co-operation is the new law of civilisation." France—the intrepid inspirer of equality and association, the land where Leclaire, and greater than he, Godin, have shown the co-operative workman the way to competence—sends us M. de Boyve, the editor of *Emancipation*, the new co-operative journal of Southern France. M. de Boyve we know as the brilliant advocate and first organiser of co-operative societies in France. In the name of the Co-operators of England, we welcome these distinguished representatives at this Congress. Another year we expect deputies from Italy—the bright land of art, which Mazzini, Garibaldi, Saffi, and Viganò inspired with the rarer art of industrial association.

Mr. Courtney remarked the other day, with his familiar penetration, that it was common "to find reformers each convinced of the excellence and perfection of his own plan, and each having great distrust of the plans of others." This is not the way of the co-operator. He knows that society has been, and is being, improved by a million agencies, and by the genius of a million minds. Co-operation merely claims to be one of the agencies, teaching the humble art of self-help and association to the great indigent class who dwell in lodgings and cottages. It is the common mark of the quack mind to pretend that one thing will do everything. The co-operator is not of those who believe ten times more than they can prove, and who can prove ten times more than anyone else can believe. Those who proselytise by persuasion alone—keep on the lines of probability. Those who propose to remake the world—as the "wild r sort" of social

reformers do—must remove the human race, since the past is in the bones of all who live, and a nihilistic removal of everybody would render the reconstruction of society difficult. In these days of State Socialism it is not the interest of statesmen, or of any who influence public affairs, to discourage the increase of co-operators, who preach no doctrine of industrial despair—who do not hang on the skirts of the State—who envy no class—who counsel no war on property—who do not believe in murder as a mode of progress—as many do in well-to-do and educated circles, as well as among the ignorant and miserable. Co-operators are of a different order of thinkers. They believe that in a free country justice can be won by reason, if the agitators will make but half the sacrifice of time, comfort, money, liberty, and life, which have to be made by those who seek social change by civil war. Aid to those striving to help themselves, but unable to make way, may be gracefully given and honourably received; but the ambition of co-operators is to reach that condition in which they shall be under no obligation to charity, to philanthropy, to patronage, to the capitalist or the State, nor need the dubious aid of revolution. Their ambition is not to be taken care of by the rich, but to command the means of taking care of themselves. The co-operator may not recast social life, but he may put equity into it. He does not profess to destroy competition, but to limit its mercilessness; and where co-operation is better, to substitute it for competition.

By co-operation the working class, represented by this Congress, have attained what competition never gave signs of giving them. They now own land—they own streets of dwellings, and almost townships—they own vast and stately warehouses in Manchester, in London, in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and in Glasgow. They own a bank whose transactions amount to 16 millions a year. They possess more than 1,400 stores, which do a business of over 30 millions a year—they own share capital of 94 millions in amount, and are making now for their 900,000 members more than 3 millions of profit annually. The mighty power of co-operation has enabled the working class in the last twenty-five years (from 1861 to 1886) to do a business of 861 millions, giving them a profit of nearly 29½ millions.

Nor do these figures measure the activity, the extent, or character of co-operators. Their splendid Wholesale Society has buying stations in the chief markets of Europe and America. Their ships are on the sea. The lifeboats they have given, ride on our coasts. They aided in establishing a Mississippi Trading Company—they have

invested £80,000 in the Manchester Canal. They issue a newspaper, minor *Journals* and *Records*, and an illustrated Wholesale Annual volume of no mean bulk and quality. They erect public fountains—they subscribe to hospitals and charities, as gentlemen do. They own libraries, newsrooms, and establish science classes,* and subscribe scholarships in the university. Formerly the religion and politics of the working people were dictated to them by employers, squires, and magistrates. Now co-operators have built halls for themselves, where they can hear the thing they will, on any day they will. No landlord nor public authority can lock the door upon them, because they own the place. No alien censor can veto the books in their libraries or the periodicals on their tables, because they have bought them, and ask no man's permission to put them there. In all the far-reaching dominions over which Her Majesty, in this Jubilee Year, as Queen or Empress, reigns, are there, or ever were, any body of working people so independent as the co-operators, who not only own property but own themselves? Every leader of stores delegated to this Congress to-day, has his reward for all his generous advocacy of associative principle, in having contributed to this imperishable distinction.

Nor will we depart from the pacific policy by which it has been won. A few words will illustrate this. Not far hence lies the High-Level Bridge spanning the Tyne, at Newcastle. Between its ponderous parts, as anyone may see, are spaces left for its expansion. Were all the great populations of Newcastle and Gateshead to pull with their fiercest strength, they could not draw those separated parts together. Were all the mechanical force Sir William Armstrong could bring from the Elswick Works applied to the task, it could only break the bridge, it could never close those openings. Yet, when summer comes, the warm, diffusing, zephyr-like breezes—silent, undemonstrative, unseen, unheard—close the apertures by their all-penetrating, all-subduing, irresistible warmth. So it is with social influences. Force is no remedy there; it may break up, but it can never build up society. It can never relax the cold contraction of error, interest, and prejudice; while the geniality of reason, of wise, earnest, persistent, and informing argument, expands the iron heart of the world, so that the inspiration of justice and compassion can enter it, and, sooner or later, concessions are made which denunciation and menace could never extort.

* The amount set apart for education in England is £19,277; in Scotland, £1,882.—*Register's Report.* Besides, many societies vote sums for the same purpose not counted because they have no permanent percentage of profits set apart.

As I conclude this vindication of our movement, it is seeming to revert to those without whom it would not be what it is. The friendly and calculating aid of Mr. Neale, Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Ludlow, to whom we are not less indebted for their constant maintenance of true co-operative principle—procured for us Parliamentary protection. We owed more than we knew to the influence of Professor Maurice. The cheery words of Canon Kingsley still linger in our ears. From that day to this, the Marquis of Ripon, our president at Manchester, has given his voice and influence in favour of co-operative production. Beyond any praise of ours, but not beyond our gratitude, were the splendid sacrifices made to this end by Mr. Vansittart Neale and Mr. Walter Morrison.

Before their day, however, before Rochdale was a watchword, there was Robert Owen with his principles, his munificence, his patience, his sublime charity of judgment and business sagacity, of whom Harriet Martineau said, "when the social state comes, he should be remembered as the sole apostle of the principle in England at the beginning of this century." Next to him was William Pare, who alone spoke in his angerless voice, and whose inextinguishable enthusiasm mainly created these Congresses. There was our lost president, Mr. Lloyd Jones, who, with his militant eloquence, confronted every foe. There, too, among those known to most present were John Collier Farn, with his rugged zeal; and his greater townsman, Dr. John Watts, to whose unrivalled mastery of co-operative facts we shall listen no more. These wandering propagandists and their colleagues, were they who inspired the Old Pioneers of Rochdale, whom it is not for me to forget on this occasion—I, who told them in their day of struggle that I would publish their successes—if they attained any, and that while I lived their names should not die. I see now James Smithies, before whose radiant faith despair itself was charmed into hopefulness; and William Cooper, with his Danish face and English pluck, whose tireless zeal disregarded alike his interests and himself; and Charles Howarth, the Archimedes of co-operation, who discovered that the equitable division of profits among purchasers was the fulcrum on which the lever could be placed which would move the stationary store onwards. Among them was, and still with us, is Abraham Greenwood, whose unobtrusive perspicacity placed him foremost among those who discerned and inspired the organisation of the Wholesale Society, which has consolidated the commercial forces of co-operation. These Old Pioneers were the men who made the co-operative cause. They

dug the foundations, they drove in the piles on which our movement stands, and on which subsequent leaders have built. They made their unnoticed town famous. We might, with the variation of a word, say of the river Roach, when co-operation was founded on its banks, what Dean Trench said of the Alma after the battle there—

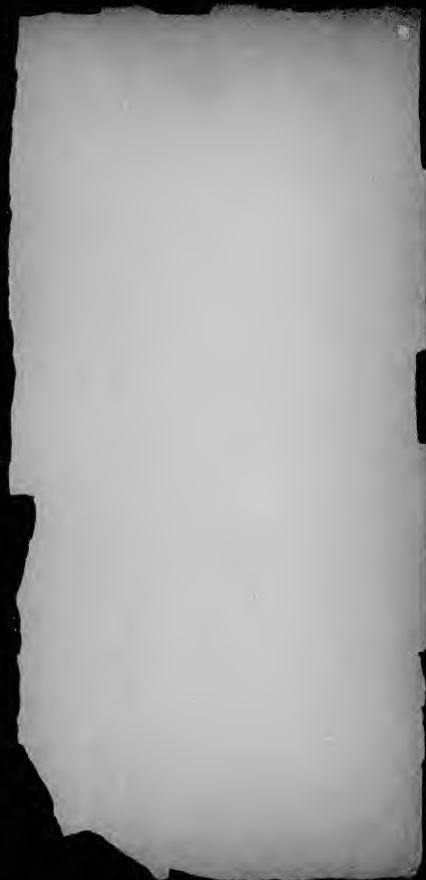
But yesterday a nameless river,
To none save wandering seaver known—
Now thou art a name for ever,
To the world's four quarters blown.

To others as well as the Pioneers, we owe a last word of tribute—to the many obscure workers who gave to this cause their humble but generous services—the storekeepers without pay—the collectors without commissions—the advocates without even applause, who took the war path in hostile days. They passed away in silence, their bones mouldering in forgotten graves, but without them co-operation had died. They were animated by a philanthropic lunacy—the noble infirmity of the generous poor—which led them, regardless of themselves, to work in the belief that the feeblest efforts for truth and justice will one day bear fruit for those who come after. They were of that class who are still the originators and soul of our new stores. Indigent but not ignorant, they held the principle that no prosperity was honourable which was derived from the privations of others. They were for equity and independence. As Sig. Luzzatti said at Milan, they were "the social explorers who added to the geography of Humanity." Profiting by their unquenchable zeal, we, who have followed them, have been able to put the word "Co-operation" in the mouth of the world. They had a wider view than many of us have learned to take. They had the lofty faith, that by good sense and wise association, society could create "that condition of social life in which it should be impossible for a man to be deprived or poor." They are beyond the reach of our gratitude. Our applause now can but fall on the "dull, cold ear of death," but we can do that the thought of which gladdened them while they lived—we can cease not our devotion to their cause until honest work has honest reward—until precariousness is known no more in the homes of the people—until the Shaksperian time shall come when—

Distribution shall undo excess,
And each man have enough.



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